

Nothing pedestrian about it!

Woman Wants GHMC To Show Footpath To Walk On

Koride Mahesh | TNN

Hyderabad: Brushed under the carpet as a pedestrian subject all these years, the plight of pedestrians is finally finding a voice and even a body. Being spearheaded by a spirited Kanthimathi Khannan, an educationist, the Right to Walk Foundation aims to remove hawkers and encroachers from pavements and push authorities to construct footpaths where there is none.



Khannan

While this may appear to be an elusive goal, Khannan, a 1979 batch management graduate from Osmania University, and a gold medalist at that, is determined to make authorities sit up and take notice of pedestrian problems.

In a city where there are no pavements or are encroached upon by hawkers, shopkeepers, toilets, electric transformers, this would be a welcome initiative. The right to walk movement comes at a time when more and more residents are waking up to the fact that more than half of the 4500-km road network in the city does not have a footpath.

Interestingly, Khannan has taken the help of Right to Information in pushing authorities to action. In one RTI application that she sent to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), she asked for the shortest route from Karolbagh colony to Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital. Her only condition in the

request being that she wanted to use a footpath for covering the distance.

And her initiative is certainly not an isolated one. The GHMC has received another application a few days ago by another person seeking information on the length of footpaths built and the usable footpath area in the city. Well, given the absence of footpaths, it is not surprising responses to these queries are awaited.

"We are trying to involve corporates to spread awareness on the need of pavements. A 'walkathon' is being planned with the corporates where the employees would walk on pavements one day," Foundation founder Khannan said.

The Foundation has also tied up with

other citizen groups such as Forum For A Better Hyderabad in its endeavour and will soon host its own website.

By now familiar with how the system works having started the movement to walk safely on the roads three years ago from the footpaths of Mehdiapatnam, Khannan now wishes to reach out to the whole city by floating this foundation.

When the High Court heard the case on footpath encroachments in 2006, the GHMC removed some encroachments in the busy area and announced hawker zones with Red, Amber and Green shades. Even some hawkers were given licenses but the exercise was limited to a few months.



Venkat Rao M

OK, SO WHERE DO I WALK?: Parked vehicles occupy road space at Masab Tank